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NSC BRIEFING

3 November 1959

SOVIET NATIONALITIES PROGRAM

- I. The Soviet regime is having more trouble with its minority nationalities (Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmens, etc.) now than any time since immediately after World War II.
 - A. Rumblings in minority areas have increased markedly during past two years following the loosening of Moscow's tight internal control.
 - B. The regime began to crack down several months ago, but there are numerous signs that the problem is still acute.
- II. For ideological reasons, Moscow continues to claim that it has no real nationality problem with the 70-odd nationalities among its population of about 208,000,000 (of which only about 113,000,000 are Great Russians).
 - A. Just last week, for example, Pravda bragged: "The greatest gain of our revolution is the solution of the nationalities question. Our state is based on the friendship of equal peoples united by the same will and desire."
- III. The facts, however, are quite the opposite, and the Kremlin has for some time been firing local party and government leaders in an effort to solve the problem.
 - A. Last December, the Soviet Party central committee, and perhaps Khrushchev personally, investigated charges of "nationalism, nepotism and malfeasance" in Turkmenistan.

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1. Republic party boss and another member of the five-man Party secretariat lost their jobs for officially encouraging Turkmen nationalism and promoting natives at the expense of local Russian cadres.
2. Two Russian members of Party secretariat were retained.
3. The Turkmen party chief was also removed from the all-Union Central Committee.
 - a. The seriousness of his offense is clear when we consider that he is only person fired from all-Union Central Committee since ousters of anti-party group and Zhukov in 1957.

B. In March, similar action was taken in Uzbekistan.

1. Here both the republic Party chief and the premier were fired for selecting and promoting "politically unqualified toadies on the basis of friendly relations."
2. A Western Communist correspondent in Moscow summed up the situation: "Some of the local boys got together and conspired to keep the Russians out."

C. In Latvia, deputy premier was dismissed in July for placing "narrow national interests" above those of Soviet state.

1. Apparently he wanted to increase production of local consumers' goods for local use--a popular suggestion with the Latvians, who cling stubbornly to memories of past freedoms and association with the West.

D. Similar cases in other republics have been treated same way, with leaders removed in Azerbaiydzhan, Kirgiziya, Moldavia, and Belorussia.

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IV. Recently the regime has broadened the campaign and is striking out at all strata of the subject populations.

A. Moscow is particularly irked by efforts of native intellectuals to glorify national traditions, culture, and ways of life, and by the resentment and animosity of minority peoples against the Great Russians.

B. The most thorough and explicit statement on these points was in a recent article in the authoritative journal Kommunist by a Kazakh Party secretary.

1. The article castigated young Kazakh intellectuals for objecting to what they had termed the "weed infestation" of Russian influence in the native language and culture.

2. It also charged that there was opposition to the new lands agricultural program because some individuals took a hostile view of the influx of non-Kazakh nationals.

C. In other republics--Moldavia, Lithuania, Armenia, Latvia, Kirgiziya--the campaign has concentrated on "bourgeois nationalism" and "survivals of the past."

1. In all cases there a thinly veiled warning that administrative measures would be taken if the expression of nationalist feelings continued.

D. Regarding the Jewish minority, Moscow seems to be encouraging anti-semitism to combat Jewish nationalism and religious fervor.

1. Reports coming in from the provinces tell of numerous incidents against Jews, many of them apparently officially condoned.

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V. Actually, the problem of nationalism has always plagued the USSR.

A. Stalin relied on purges and deportations to keep the minorities quiet; Khrushchev has tried to be more subtle.

B. Many of the current problems in this sphere, however, are by-products of Khrushchev's political and economic reforms.

1. Shackling the secret police, for instance, has permitted all kinds of "deviationist" elements to come more into the open.
2. The "new lands" program added fuel to the fire because of the migration of thousands of Great Russians into Kazakhstan.
3. The big economic reorganization in 1957--as we said at the time--put more decision-making and administration in the provinces and opened the door for the minorities to put their interests ahead of Moscow's.

C. This latter problem is known officially as "localism."

1. In effect this means that the various republics are not fulfilling their plans for shipping goods beyond their own borders; in other words, Latvian or Moldavian industrial chiefs are bent on taking care of their own people first, and what is left over will be shipped to the rest of the country.

D. There is every indication that Moscow regards the "localism" problem as increasingly serious, and it is now a criminal offense to indulge in such practices.

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VI. There is reason to believe that the shifts of security (KGB) chiefs in four non-Russian republics since September are connected with the nationalism problem.

- A. The second-ranking man in the KGB was posted as police boss in Kazakhstan on the heels of the stern party denunciation there against "nationalist manifestations."
- B. In three other republics, Turkmenistan, Azerbaydzhan and Moldavia, the changes followed attacks against "localism," "nepotism," "self-interest," and "national animosity."
- C. As of now, however, the police have still remained in the background, and the party bosses in the minority republics apparently are still charged with the responsibility for correcting the situation.

VII. In sum, the minority nationalities of the Soviet Union are being subjected to a neutralization campaign unprecedented since the time of Stalin; considering the current emphasis being given the problem, the regime may decide to push the drive even further.

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BACKGROUND

SOVIET POPULATION STATISTICS

REPUBLIC	POPULATION (1959)	PERCENTAGE OF NATIVE ELEMENT AMONG REPUBLIC POPULATIONS	
		1959 (rough estimate)	1939 (official)
RSFSR	117,494,000	75	73
Armenia	1,768,000	80	84
Azerbaydzhan	3,700,000	59	63
Belorussia	8,060,000	78	81
Estonia	1,196,000	75	91
Georgia	4,049,000	61	61
Kazakhstan	9,301,000	45	57
Kirghzia	2,063,000	65	67
Latvia	2,094,000	60	76
Lithuania	2,713,000	65	80
Moldavia	2,880,000	60	65
Tadzhikistan	1,982,000	75	78
Turkmenistan	1,520,000	70	72
Ukraine	41,893,000	77	80
Uzbekistan	8,113,000	71	76
	208,826,000		

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Note: Jewish population estimated at 2.5 million DATE: 12-24-74 REVIEWER:

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